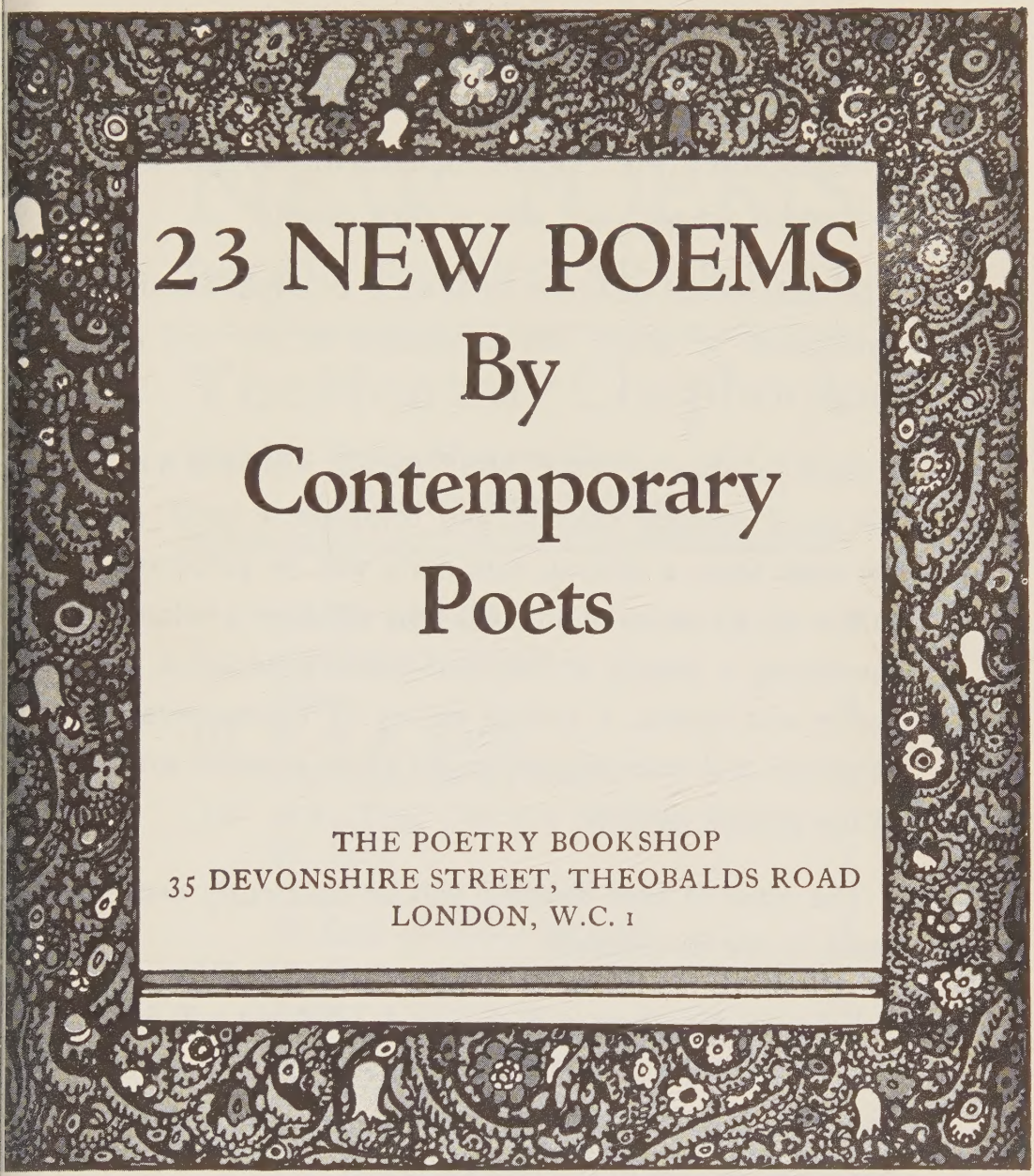

THE MONTHLY CHAPBOOK
(POETRY & DRAMA New Series) No 1 Vol 1 July, 1919

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET

THE MONTHLY CHAPBOOK will appear between the 10th and 20th of each month.

It replaces the quarterly POETRY & DRAMA, the publication of which was suspended at the end of 1914.

Each number of THE MONTHLY CHAPBOOK will be of separate interest, and complete in itself. At the same time, a definite continuity will be preserved so that the six issues of any half-year will form a volume combining a record of that half-year's production in poetry and drama, a critical survey of contemporary literature, and numerous examples of the creative work of the present period.

The cover of each number will be differently decorated to suit its contents.

Former subscribers to POETRY & DRAMA will find THE MONTHLY CHAPBOOK as useful from the student's point of view, and more entertaining from the point of view of the general reader.

TWENTY-THREE NEW POEMS

By CONTEMPORARY POETS

The Monthly Chapbook

Number One • Volume One • July 1919

(Edited by Harold Monro)

I	JOHN ALFORD	3
II	HERBERT READ *Etude*	4
III	W. P. R. KERR *The Dead in the Desert*	5
IV	WALTER DE LA MARE *To Lucy*	7
V	OSBERT SITWELL *De Luxe* (*Nursery Rhyme*)	8
VI	H. D. *Leda*	10
VII	SIEGFRIED SASSOON *The Portrait*	12
VIII	D. H. LAWRENCE *The Little Town at Evening*	13
IX	F. S. FLINT *Coastline*	14

		Page
X	S. SITWELL *Church and Stage*	15
XI	W. J. TURNER *Stars*	17
XII	RODNEY PASLEY *The Circus*	18
XIII	HAROLD MONRO *Underworld*	20
XIV	T. STURGE MOORE *On Shakespeare's Sonnets*	22
XV	EDITH SITWELL *Interlude*	23
XVI	ROBERT NICHOLS *Madrigal of the Loving Kindness of Love*	24
XVII	R. HOLMAN *The Charge*	25
XVIII	ROSE MACAULAY *Driving Sheep*	26
XIX	DOUGLAS GOLDRING *A Triumphal Ode*	27
XX	FREDERIC MANNING *Echo*	29
XXI	W. H. DAVIES *The Rat*	30
XXII	RICHARD ALDINGTON *Freedom*	31
XXIII	CHARLOTTE MEW *Sea Love*	32

I

GLORY, glory to the sun
who spends his being
caring not what he shines upon
nor for whose seeing.

In the furrow swells the wheat
and the chestnut leaf respires
quickened to life by the heat
of his innocent fires.

Small thanks the farmer allows,
turning his bay,
but watches with reckoning brows
the fall of the day.

Clouds flame in the upper air ;
the fields slip to the night ;
but the rugged horsemen of Thibet stir
to a finger of light.

They wrap their skins about
and spear in hand,
round up their flocks and shout
and scour the land.

II

Étude

THAT white hand poised
Above the ivory keys
Will soon descend to
Shatter
The equable surface of my reverie.

To what abortion
Will the silence give birth ?

Noon of moist heat and the moan
Of raping bees,
And light like a sluice of molten gold
On the satiate, petitioning leaves.

In yellow fields
The mute agony of reapers.

Does the hard horizon
Give release ?

Well, higher,
  against the wider void the immaculate
  angels of lust
lean
  on the swanbreasts of heaven.

III

The Dead in the Desert

THESE bones lie here alone, lost in the desert.
None knows whose were they, or by what long roads
Men came to lay them here : for they are dead
Dead long ago and their bones lie here in the sand.

In their despair they lay down here in the sand
And morning came up again and they were dead :
Years have gone by, their flesh is rotted away :
Alone and bleached their bones lie in the sand.

Their horses' bones lie here scattered beside them,
Garments and trappings are worn away and decayed :
Here is a rag of red and there a glint of gold,
And their swords are thin and rusty in the scabbards.

Whether they came, merchants coveting gold,
Or pilgrims to some shrine whose rumours rang
Like distant bells over the distant lands,
Or wanderers hardly knowing what they sought :

Whether they came across the level sea,
Or climbing the winding high-walled mountain passes,
Or by the endless dull roads out of the cities,
They had not dreamed the desert should end all.

Nor was it for this their mothers nourished them,
And their fathers laughed to hear them laugh out loud,
So long ago, when they were little ones,
Before the desert and forgetfulness swallowed them.

Their mothers and fathers are gathered to their people
In the homely fields of little villages
Or within familiar walls of the city churches :
The boys that played with them once are dead and buried.

No man remembers them, no man weeps for them :
The years drift quietly over them like sand.
For the end of all their journeying and their seeking,
Whatever they sought, their bones lie here in the desert.

IV

To Lucy

STRANGE : as I sate a-brooding here
While memory plied her phantom thread
Your once-loved face came back, my dear,
From 'mid the distant dead.

That pleasant cheek, hair smooth and brown,
Clear brows o'er eyes wistful and gay—
You stand in your alpaca gown,
And ghost my heart away.

I was a child, yes, nine years old ;
And you a woman. Stoop you close.
To heed a passion never told,
Though faded now its rose.

Do you remember ? Few my pence ;
I hoarded them with miserly care
To buy you, in my innocence,
A birthday maidenhair.

I see its trembling fronds. I sit,
Hunched on my pillow, cold and lone,
Crazed with those eyes that mocking-sweet
Still smile into my own.

You tossed me not one thought I vow :
A foolish child, indeed. And yet,
Of all who have loved you—haply, now,
I only not forget.

You to the Shades and the voiceless birds
And I to growing old. Ah, true !
Yet tell by Styx these stumbling words,
And mark how they envy you !

V

De Luxe

Nursery Rhyme

THE dusky king of Malabar
Is chief of Eastern potentates ;
Yet he wears no clothes, except
The jewels that decency dictates.

A thousand Malabaric wives
Roam beneath green-crested palms ;
Revel in the vileness
That Bishop Heber psalms.

From honeycombs of light and shade,
They stop to watch black bodies dart
Into the sea to search for pearls.
By means of diabolic art

Magicians keep the sharks away ;
Mutter, utter, each dark spell,
So that if a thief should steal
One more black would go to hell.

But Mrs. Freudenthal, in furs,
From Brioche dreams to mild surprise
Awakes ; the music throbs and purrs.
The 'cellist with Albino eyes

Rivets attention ; is, in fact,
The very climax ; pink eyes flash
Whenever, nervous and pain-racked,
He hears the drums and cymbals clash.

Mrs. Freudenthal day-dreams
(Ice-spoon half way to her nose)
Till the girl in ochre screams,
Hits out at the girl in rose.

This is not at all the way
To act in large and smart hotels ;
Angrily the couples sway ;
Eagerly the riot swells.

Girls who cannot act with grace
Should learn behaviour, stay at home ;
The convent is the proper place.
Why not join the Church of Rome ?

A waiter nearly drops the tray—
Twenty tea-cups in one hand ;
Now the band joins in the fray,
Fighting for the Promised Land.

Mrs. Freudenthal resents
The scene ; and slowly rustles out ;
Then the orchestra relents,
Waking from its fever-bout.

VI

Leda

WHERE the slow river
meets the tide,
a red swan lifts red wings
and darker beak,
and underneath the purple down
of his soft breast
uncurls his coral feet.

Through the deep purple
of the dying heat
of sun and mist,
the level ray of sun-beam
has caressed
the lily with dark breast,
and flecked with richer gold
its golden crest.

Where the slow lifting
of the tide,
floats into the river
and slowly drifts
among the reeds,
and lifts the yellow flags,
he floats
where tide and river meet.

Ah, kingly kiss—
no more regret
nor old deep memories
to mar the bliss ;
where the low sedge is thick,
the gold day-lily
outspreads and rests
beneath soft fluttering
of red swan wings
and the warm quivering
of the red swan's breast.

VII

The Portrait

I WATCH you, gazing at me from the wall,
And wonder how you'd match your dreams with mine,
If, mastering time's illusion, I could call
You back to share this quiet candle-shine.

For you were young, three-hundred years ago ;
And by your looks I guess that you were wise. . . .
Come, whisper soft, and Death will never know
You've slipped away from those calm, painted eyes.

Strange is your voice. . . Poor ninny, dead so long,
And all your pride forgotten like your name.
" *One April morn I heard a blackbird's song,*
And joy was in my heart like leaves aflame."

And so you died before your songs took wind ;
While Andrew Marvel followed in your wake.
" *Love thrilled me into music. I could sing*
But for a moment,—but for beauty's sake."

Who passes ? There's a star-lit breeze that stirs
The glimmer of white lilies in the gloom.
Who speaks ? Death has his silent messengers.
And there was more than silence in this room

While you were gazing at me from the wall
And wondering how you'd match your dreams with mine,
If, mastering time's illusion, you could call
Me back to share your vanished candle-shine.

VIII

The Little Town at Evening

THE chime of the bells, and the church clock striking eight
Solemnly and distinctly cries down the babel of children
still playing in the hay.
The church draws nearer upon us, gentle and great
In shadow, covering us under the gray.

Like drowsy children the houses fall asleep
Under the fleece of shadow, as in between
Tall and dark the church moves, anxious to keep
Us sleeping, safely soft and unseen.

Hardly a murmur comes from the weary brood.
I wish the church could cover me up with the rest
In the home place. Why is it this land should exclude
Me from sleeping and resting at one with the folk I love best ?

IX

Coastline

HERE the wind
winnows the sand
as it sifts
through the grass-wrack,
and the grains beat,
needle-points,
against the skin.

Here the sea
gnaws the long coast,
churning the shingle
over the beach,
and the waves,
wind-driven,
whiten and topple
over our bodies.

Wind and sea
and the print of naked feet.

X

Church and Stage

TERRA feros partus immania monstra gigantas
Edidit ausuros in Jovis ire domum,
Beating the marble floor with well-drilled, giddy precision,
The hosts of aspirants are on the safest road to Heaven.

De facto, or indeed, before they see
The bubble of our pride above their head,
The sound of far-surpassing seraph voices
May raise you, for a moment only, with the dead.

And there you have the chance I so desire
To hear the singing of the true elect
Who celebrate, above our carnal hire—
For friendship only—their most happy state.

The seraphs and the cherubim
Are singing through the crystal leaves
That guard the empty balconies
And echo round the silent eaves.

The pagan halcyons confine
Their soft-breathed flutings to the lifeless woods,
That with their brittle arms entwine
The zephyrs hiding from the gold-maned sun.

And hidden from the peeping eyes
Of prostrate multitudes who pray,
The famous vocalist outpours
The song of nightingales at play.

Provincial daughters, every whim,
As every caprice, gratified,
Your chattering voices raise the hymn
As a pure flower of thanksgiving.

Outside, like tumbling acrobats
On green-spread carpets who let fall
Their weary limbs before the town,
The fountain flashing through the tall

And agitated trees throw down
The showering, scintillating plumes,
As if, above the hollow town,
Among the feeding flocks of clouds,

Great birds are clinging to the flowers
Our feeble voices prosper in the air,
In hopes of reaching the unshuttered light
Behind which burns the molten god-like hair.

XI

Stars

WHEN all the world stands heaped in silent hills
About the dying Sun I hear the stars
Start singing ; as soldiers sing in far-off wars
When each man's thought the distant homeland fills.
I watch their breathing draw as the nightingale trills
Into their skyey country, and the gleam
Of their strange gaze bending o'er me that dream
Among the trees, shines in earth's distant rills.
There I sing faint songs among the ferns and grass
Of some far land that has been lost to them.
Under the sombre boughs those wanderers pale,
Imaged like flowers dropping in streams that pass,
The dark earth's quivering rivers nightlong gem,
Till from the world like ghosts at dawn they sail.

XII

The Circus

ROUND the ring, every day,
Weary earth spins her way—
Every night, every day.

Whip in His mighty hands
There in the centre stands,
As He has always stood
Since the old game began,
Since He found sport was good,
God, the great Circus-Man.

Tier after tier on high
Rises the gallery
Out to the further sky.

Sometimes a star or two
With nothing else to do

Shines in the audience ;

Now the old King, the Sun,
His royal duty done
Comes in to see the fun ;
Now his white Prince of Wales
Into the circle sails ;

(Many a star affirms
They're not on speaking terms,
That's why they sit apart.)

Often the benches wide
Stand all unoccupied.

Still the earth spins her way
Round the ring, every day.

Then wearied overlong
Flagging, she felt the strong
Cut of a cruel thong—

Millions of men have died
Where the lash bit her side ;

Nobody understands.

Whip in His wrinkled hands
There in the centre stands,
As He has always stood
Since He found sport was good,
Since the old game began,
God, the great Circus-Man.

Round the ring, every day
Weary earth spins her way,
Every night, every day.

XIII

Underworld

THE vaults down in the underworld are not so dumb as they would seem
To us who walk above them with our feet upon their roofs.
For the shapeless is for ever groping back to form : the dead make sounds
Like pebbles falling in a pool, or roots that hope to reach the water,
Stretching out, and writhing out, and moaning out.

There is no end among the corridors below : they wind about the world,
And shadows flow along them in a smooth continual whisper.
Or slowly from the far-away a rumour will come floating
(Through cavern after cavern) of a dark commotive struggle :
Spirits breaking from the shapeless, called by Time and taking journey.
Eyes are sealed, and voices wordless : they have just begun to wonder
What body means, where light can be : their nerves are feeling forward.
They are groping at their roof ;
How they strive to force their hands up,
Crawling over mounds of skulls
To the tender thrilling surface.

There are shadows there of shadows. There are images and spectres
Of the shadows on the high earth : ghosts invisible to eyes
Too accustomed to the daylight. But by looking inward, backward
In the pool of mind, and leaning
To that place of inward shadows,
Where the world is like a spectre,
You can feel among the turnings and the spaces of the underworld,
And help the groping spirits into thought. Now they will wonder :
" What was that ? What are those feet I hear ?
Who moves above my head ? Why is that distant earth so white and clear,
And filled with strong vibration ? I will learn to make a body,
And to move myself about."
You can lead their ghostly movings.
They will waken into form. They will make a world about them.
They will walk if you desire them.

XIV

On Shakespeare's Sonnets

WHETHER his loves were many or but two ?—
Whether his heart grew strong or bled to waste ?—
Whether he toyed with thought as idlers do
Or some unseasoned lines betray his haste ?—
We enter here as to an empty house ;
As pale folk, from a far-off clime and date,
Peep into pictured halls where the carouse
Of mummied kings once mocked their certain fate.
We gaze at signs he saw, but only guess
How he read what we read : not bloom to fruit,
Meal to moth's wing, sight to blind eye is less
Recoverable ! Time treads life underfoot :
These dead black words can warm us but as coal ;
Once, forest leaves, they murmured round his soul.

XV

Interlude

AMID this hot green glowing gloom
A word falls with a raindrop's boom. . .

Like baskets of ripe fruit in air
The bird-songs seem, suspended where

Those goldfinches—the ripe warm lights
Peck slyly at them—take quick flights.

My feet are feathered like a bird
Among the shadows scarcely heard ;

I bring you branches green with dew
And fruits that you may crown anew

Your whirring waspish-gilded hair
Amid this cornucopia—

Until your warm lips bear the stains
And bird-blood leap within your veins.

XVI

Madrigal of the Loving Kindness of Love

IT was not that her patient eyes
Were more blue, more sad, more serene
Than any unattainable skies
Glimpsed, through an April scud, between
Twin towers of irised fastnesses ;

It was not that her voice's tone,
So hesitant, gay and musical,
Recalled a stream which runs alone,
Flitting, where sun and shadow fall,
From flower to flower, from stone to stone ;

It was not the sweet gust of her lips
Out-sorceled the spell of any wine
Wherein a secret godhead slips
For the fond worshipper divine
Dreams and immortal fellowships ;

Not for th' affliction of her eyes,
Nor the felicity of her voice,
Nor her lips' draught of Paradise
But that of sovereign, single choice
All these she made my poor love's prize,
Grieve I and evermore rejoice !

XVII

The Charge

I SAW the soldiers
Spring from their cover,
Their heathery hollows
Across the cold sweet downs.
They rose at a small faint cry
And ran towards me cheering.

Night drooped on
And the clouds swept over,
Blurring the little hills.

The soldiers raced,
Breathless,
And each one of them,
To make a mimic bayonet,
Had thrust a sprig of living, flaming gorse
Into his rifle's mouth.

XVIII

Driving Sheep

THE green east flows with the tides of the rose
Between the bars of night, half-drawn.
The moon shines cold and faint on the fold
Where sheep glimmer, gray in the dawn.
Oh, thin like a dream their sad cries seem,
Caught high above time and space ;
And old as the world, from out fleece dew-pearled,
Gazes each meek sheep-face.
Dazed with sleep, and numb, the sheep-women come,
And open the field gate wide.
The sheep surge out in an idiot rout,
Like gray foam swept on a tide.
Keep steady, move slow, we've three miles to go
To Grantchester from Chalk Field pen.
Herd them up all the way, lest some go astray,
Of our imbecile two score and ten.
Unreasoning, blind, each poor unhinged mind
Takes its thought from the sheep next ahead.
Through each hedge gate (if you reach it too late)
They charge, wild and pale, like the dead.
Their lilting bleat, their sharp, scuttling feet,
Are strange, strange as dreams before day,
And . . . counting the sheep . . . we sway . . . into sleep . . .
And trail along . . . foolish as they.

The wide tides of gold surge, quiet and cold ;
The green west turns deep blue ;
The moon's worn slip very soon will dip,
Like a pale night-bird, from view.
There seems no sound in the world all round
But of horn feet and quavering cries
In the young, cold hour. . . . Like flame, like a flower,
The sun springs, huge with surprise.

XIX

A Triumphal Ode

Written on the occasion of the grand MARCH PAST
Of British Poets and Men of Letters
which took place,
under the Auspices of the
League of National & Civic Idiocy, on
VICTORY DAY, JULY 19th, 1919.

OF Shavian prophets, bearded, and the bleat
Of infant Sitwells baying at the moon ;
Of abstruse Eliot, and the bittersweet
Vieux Gosse—Sing Boom ! Sing Boom !

See ! here they come ! The martial music swells ;
Northcliffe, beflagged, leads on, with H. G. Wells ;
And pacing solemnly, and pacing slow,
Come Hueffer, Shorter and Sir Sidney Low !
Now, there's a murmuring as of asphodels,
The while each poet mouthes his roundelay—
The bards, the bards ! Be still my heart, 'tis they !

Here's J. C. Squire, and here the laurelled Shanks ;
There's Ezra's circle of performing Yanks ;
And here that *ardent* and *enduring* one
Who, with cool madness, faced th' opposing Hun
Until—flick ! flick !—they fell down every one.
And here is Lewis, blasting as he goes—
He plays his one-man-band, yet keeps the pose !
Here's Secker with his owl ; the Coterie ;
And gentle John with " gray dog Timothy " :
Here's sly Monro with Chapbook under arm
And fair aspirants round him in a swarm ;
Here is our Centaur, with desponding lyre ;
And here the Wufflet with admiring sire !

Now come the veterans of Victorian years—
Kipling in khaki, Binyon in tears.
Here Yeats, with eyes distraught, and tangled hair,
Moans the lost vogue of Deirdre, in Mayfair ;
And agèd Moore, detached, a little bored,
Tells doubtful tales to Mrs. Humphrey Ward.
See, now, Dame Propaganda lifts her gamp
And shelters under it each scribbling scamp.
Hola, Sir Hall ! Hail Beith ! Hail Buchan bland ;
See, Dame Corelli takes Hugh Walpole's hand ;
And Dora and Censora hover nigh,
To tempt Sassoon and Read. They cannot buy ;
So Bennett weeps, and Beaver heaves a sigh.

Now comes a rabble foul—avert the eyes !—
Hultonian " patriots " and Lloyd-Georgian spies.
Hurl them from off Parnassus, with a shout —
Even from the Press Club let them be kicked out !
Chase them from London's pubs, and bid them go
Across the foam, to lunch with Clemenceau !
Chase them with odorous eggs and hunks of cheese !
Be quiet, Muse, I will not sing of these.

Of all the Georgian and Edwardian potes,
Of all the Mile End Yidds in velvet coats,
Of all the sets, the circles and the cliques
Who boost each other's works in their critiques,
Of all on whom E.M. has ever smiled ;
Of all whom Galloway has ever kyled ;
Of " marvellous boys," and of youth's soulful loom—
Sing Boom !
Sing Boom !
Sing Boom !

XX

Echo

THE wind shakes the poplars,
Glistening.
Very delicately the wind plays with them,
As Love with the maidens,
When the green poplars ripple, upon glistening flesh,
And the girls bow shyly,
The golden heads drooping into the fragrance of bosoms ;
The small breasts up-lifted, with held breath.

Even so, in Artois, the poplars were glistening,
Suddenly convulsive, and swaying,
In the wind and golden light.
In the whiteness of dawns, and the evenings
Tremulous with unsuspected airs,
Like a dance of girls.
And out of that anger, and weariness,
One saw the wide house of Alcinoös
Restless, and Nausicaa . . .
Beauty striking upon tired senses,
Like a cool wind.

Like a dance of girls on a greensward . . .
And we have broken the earth with our hands ;
Its bones whiten the fields ;
The strength builded and stablished of kings and armies :
And we, we only,
The frail, the fugitive,
Restless stirrings of loveliness,
We only endure.

XXI

The Rat

"THAT woman there is almost dead,
Her feet and hands like heavy lead ;
Her cat's gone out for his delight,
He will not come again this night.

" Her husband in a pothouse drinks,
Her daughter at a soldier winks ;
Her son is at his sweetest game,
Teasing the cobbler old and lame.

" Now with these teeth that powder stones,
I'll pick at one of her cheekbones :
When husband, son and daughter come,
They'll soon see who was left at home."

XXII

Freedom

AT last, after years, I am saturated
With pity and agony and tears ;
At last I have reached indifference ;
Now I am almost free—
A gold pellet of sunlight
Dropped, curdling, into green water.

The grass, which is one with our flesh
And bends like an old man
Back to the mould, their mother,
Beckons with long fingers
The poplar-nymphs and white-ash dryads
To caress their white feet dancing,
Weightless, pale and immortal.

The dead may be myriad
But my nostrils are sweet with crushed leaves,
My eyes clear as flowers,
My hands stainless ;
About me is opulent light
That drenches the lightless sea,
Piercing shadowy windless places
Where sea-moss fringes quiet pebbles.

Over harsh slopes the centaurs gallop
With whistling manes, a rattle of hoofs ;
White shapes rustle the dew-dripping thickets ;
Slim fauns dance by the grass track.
I have passed through hate and pity,
Desire and anguish, to this :
I am myself,
I am free.

XXIII

Sea Love

TIDE be runnin' the great world over :
T'was only last June month I mind that we
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover
So everlastin' as the sea.

Heer's the same little fishes that sputter and swim :
Wi' the moon's old glim on the grey wet sand ;
An' him no more to me nor me to him
Than the wind goin' over my hand.

THE following is a rough scheme (subject to probable alterations and improvements) of the projected contents of the numbers for any one year :—

JANUARY.—A chronicle and critical summary of the Poetry and Drama of the past year.

FEBRUARY.—A critical summary of the General Literature of the past year.

MARCH.—Book of New Poems by a single author.

APRIL.—New Play by living author.

MAY.—Foreign number. Chronicle of French poetry and notes on Italian, German and Russian literature.

JUNE.—Book of New Poems.

JULY.—Anthology of New Poetry.

AUGUST.—Article on the Drama.

SEPTEMBER.—Book of Songs, with music.

OCTOBER.—French Poetry.

NOVEMBER.—Annotated Bibliography of books of poetry, etc., published during the past year, together with list of authors and books published during the past five years.

DECEMBER.—Children's Number.

THE MONTHLY CHAPBOOK, No. 2 (August, 1919), will be entitled, DECORATION IN THE THEATRE, by Albert Rothenstein (with designs by the author).

Each number will cost one shilling, and will be sent on receipt of remittance for any period of months that such a remittance may cover. (Postage 1d. per copy.)